United Nations

Daily Highlights

Department of Public Information • Central News Section • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/1544
17 December 1993

FRIDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Secretary-General leaves New York for visit to Tokyo, Seoul, Pyongyang and Beijing; to return by 29 December.

+ Croat and Serb representatives in Croatia sign Christmas Truce Agreement, mediated by UNPROFOR Force Commander, to last from 23 December till 15 January; agree to confidence-building measures and negotiations on "general and lasting" cease-fire.

+ Secretary-General welcomes joint Declaration on Northern Ireland by Irish and British Prime Ministers; hopes for immediate end to violence and lasting political settlement acceptable to all parties.

+ General Assembly, adopting 45 resolutions recommended by First Committee, calls for moratorium on export of anti-personnel land mines; asks Conference on Disarmament to begin talks on nuclear-test-ban treaty.

+ Secretary-General recommends that Security Council extend UNOMUR mandate for six months, saying Mission has promoted stability and confidence in Uganda and Rwanda.

+ Fifth Committee approves draft by which General Assembly would appropriate almost $9 million for UNOMSA for 1 January to 31 July 1994.

+ UNHCR appoints Michel Moussali, Swiss national, as Special Envoy for Burundi emergency; Department of Humanitarian Affairs allocates $5 million from Emergency Revolving Fund to WFP to aid Burundi refugees.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali today left New York for Tokyo, for an official visit to Japan that is expected to last until 22 December. He will then visit Seoul, capital of the Republic of Korea, "for a couple of days", according to a United Nations spokesman. The Secretary-General will then travel by road to Pyongyang, and will stay in the Democratic People's

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Republic of Korea from 24 to 26 December. He will also spend a day in Beijing, before returning to New York no later than 29 December.

Addressing correspondents yesterday, the Secretary-General described his visit to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea as a mission of goodwill in the framework of preventive diplomacy. "We want to know what the facts are, to listen to the different actors and then, if there is anything I can offer to the Member States and the Security Council, I will do it", he said. "But I have no mandate and I will not do any kind of mediation."

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Croat and Serb representatives in Croatia today signed a Christmas Truce Agreement mediated by the General Jean Cot, Force Commander of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR). The two parties undertook to cease all armed hostilities on all existing confrontation lines from midnight on 23 December until midnight on 15 January 1994. They also undertook to implement certain confidence-building measures with effect from the signing of the Agreement.

According to the text of the Agreement, the parties undertook to open negotiations as soon as the truce takes effect on a "general and lasting" cease-fire, with the separation of forces on both sides. Negotiations on this "General Cease-fire Agreement" are to be conducted on the basis of draft texts which they have discussed.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has warmly welcomed the joint Declaration on Northern Ireland which was issued by the Irish and British Prime Ministers on Wednesday, according to a United Nations spokesman. The Secretary-General expressed the hope that a permanent cessation of violence would ensue immediately and that the basis had been laid for achievement of a lasting political settlement acceptable to all the parties.

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The General Assembly yesterday called for a moratorium on the export of anti-personnel land mines, asked the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva to begin negotiations on a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty, and invited States to end the illegal export of conventional weapons. The Assembly took those actions in the course of adopting 45 resolutions recommended by the First Committee (Disarmament and International Security). The resolutions covered a wide range of issues, including regional disarmament, non-proliferation, bilateral disarmament talks, international transfer of arms, outer space and Antarctica.

In a resolution adopted without a vote, the Assembly noted that there were as many as 85 million uncleared land mines throughout the world, and called on States to implement the export moratorium on mines that posed grave dangers to civilian populations. Again acting without a vote, the Assembly

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endorsed a decision taken by the Conference on Disarmament to give its Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear-Test Ban a mandate to negotiate a "universal and internationally and effectively verifiable comprehensive test-ban treaty". The Assembly's action was described by the President, S.R. Insanally (Guyana) as "a truly historic occasion".

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has recommended that the mandate of the United Nations Observer Mission Uganda-Rwanda (UNOMUR) be extended for a further period of six months. In a report to the Security Council dated 15 December (S/26878), he recalled that UNOMUR had been established in order to create an atmosphere conducive to a negotiated settlement of the conflict in Rwanda, and to underscore the importance that the international community attached to the maintenance of peace and security in the region. UNOMUR had promoted stability in the area and was also serving as a confidence-building mechanism. That view, he added, appeared to be shared by the Governments of Uganda and Rwanda.

The Secretary-General expressed appreciation to the Government of Uganda for its cooperation, saying that UNOMUR's ability to discharge its mandate effectively would continue to depend on the assistance and cooperation of the Ugandan authorities. He also paid tribute to the military and civilian personnel of UNOMUR for the professionalism with which they had carried out their tasks.

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The Fifth Committee (Administrative and Budgetary) yesterday approved a draft decision by which the General Assembly would appropriate almost $9 million for the United Nations Observer Mission in South Africa (UNOMSA) for the period 1 January to 31 July 1994. The decision, which was taken without a vote, was based on reports the Committee received yesterday from the Secretary-General and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) on the financing of the Mission.

According to the Secretary-General's report, UNOMSA's activities in early 1994 would focus mainly on elections due to be held on 27 April 1994 in South Africa. The Mission would then be phased out between May and the end of July 1994. The draft decision stated that should UNOMSA be extended or have additional requirements, the Secretary-General should seek the concurrence of the Advisory Committee to make related commitments. He would also be asked to consider efforts to procure the most economical office space and to buy supplies locally for the Mission.

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United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Sadako Ogata has appointed Michel Moussali, a Swiss national, as her Special Envoy for the Burundi emergency. Mr. Moussali, a former UNHCR Director of International Protection, will work closely with the Governments of Burundi and host

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countries Rwanda, Tanzania and Zaire to find a solution to the crisis so that Burundi refugees can return home as soon as possible.

In a related development, the Department of Humanitarian Affairs has allocated $5 million from its Central Emergency Revolving Fund to the World Food Programme (WFP) after an urgent request for funds to provide emergency food assistance for refugees from Burundi. WFP has already started a feeding programme that draws on existing food stocks, and the allocation will allow it to make local purchases to meet the needs of some 150,000 displaced persons inside Burundi as well as 600,000 refugees in Rwanda, Tanzania and Zaire.

Last month, the Department of Humanitarian Affairs launched an inter-agency appeal for $9.5 million for humanitarian assistance to those displaced within Burundi. Of that, almost $3 million was for the WFP to provide emergency food assistance. In addition, WFP has prepared a regional emergency operation plan of almost $14 million. The allocation from the Revolving Fund will allow WFP to continue its feeding programme while waiting for contributions from donors.

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